



**FIELD**



# FIELD

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SILENCE

Now it is time to say what you have to say.  
The room is quiet.  
The whirring fan has been unplugged,  
and the girl who was tapping  
a pencil on her desktop has been removed.

So tell us what is on your mind.  
We want to hear the sound of your foliage,  
the unraveling of your tool kit,  
your songs of loneliness,  
your songs of hurt.

The trains are motionless on the tracks,  
the ships at rest in the harbor.  
The dogs are cocking their heads  
and the gods are peering down with interest.  
The town is hushed,

and everyone here has a copy.  
So tell us about your parents —  
your father behind the steering wheel  
your mother at the sink.  
Let's hear about all the clouds you saw, the tall trees.

Read the poem you brought with you tonight.  
The ocean has stopped sloshing around,  
and even Beethoven  
is sitting up in his death bed,  
his cold hearing-horn inserted in one ear.



## SOME DAYS

Some days I put the people in their places at the table,  
bend their legs at the knees,  
if they come with that feature,  
and fix them into the tiny wooden chairs.

All afternoon they face one another,  
the man in the brown suit,  
the woman in the blue dress,  
perfectly motionless, perfectly behaved.

But other days, I am the one  
who is lifted up by the sides  
then lowered into the dining room of a doll house  
to sit with the others at the long table.

Very funny,  
but how would you like it  
if you never knew from one day to the next  
if you were going to spend it

striding around like a vivid god,  
your shoulders in the clouds,  
or sitting down there with the wallpaper,  
staring straight ahead with your little plastic face?



I WED A TOY BRIDE

1. Night

The toy bride's skin smells like milk from time to time. Perhaps she'll give birth sooner or later. I put out the candlelight and whisper a scolding to the ear of the toy bride like this:

[Thou art like a new-born baby]. . . .

The toy bride answers, flying into a rage in the middle of the darkness.

[I have taken a walk to a pasture.]

The toy bride might come back, remembering the colorful landscape of noon. She is warm like the notepad in my bosom. I waste away. The scent of her is all that comes close to me.

2. Night

If I give a needle to the toy bride, she will pierce some random object thoughtlessly. Notepad, paperback, watch. And the place in my body where the past perches most closely inside.

This is proof that thorns rise in the mind of the toy bride. That is, like a rose . . .

My light body bleeds a little. I eat a fresh mandarin orange to cure the scar in the darkness whenever night comes.

The toy bride who has only a ring in her body looks for me, furling the dark like a curtain.

I am found out soon. Pain strikes me down — I thought the ring which touched my skin was a needle.

Lighting a candle, the toy bride looks for her mandarin orange.

I pretend to know nothing, and complain of no pain whatsoever.

## CROW'S-EYE VIEW, POEM NO. X: BUTTERFLY

A shred of torn wallpaper calls a dying butterfly to mind. It is a secret mouth in touch with the other world. One day, I think of the dying butterfly, examining my beard in the mirror. The butterfly with drooping wings drinks dewdrops curdled in a warm breath. If I die while lifting my mouth from the other world, the butterfly will fly away as if to stand up just after my sitting down. I'll keep this secret inside.

CROW'S-EYE VIEW, POEM NO. XV

1

I'm in the main room which has no mirror. The *I* which I left in the mirror is also absent. Now, I am shaking for fear of my *I* in the mirror. I wonder whether the *I* in the mirror is weaving a plot to hurt me when I'm somewhere else.

2

I slept on a cold bed bearing a crime. I was absent from my dream. Military boots filled with false legs dirtied my dream's white paper.

3

I, secretly, enter a room where a mirror is hanging that I might release myself from the mirror. Meanwhile, my *I* in the mirror appears with a gloomy face. The *I* in the mirror expresses his regret at me. Just as I am behind bars because of him, he is trembling, imprisoned by me.

4

My dream where I am not. My mirror where my impostor does not show up. He who longs for my solitude — there's no problem, even if solitude is merely idle. At last, I decided to recommend suicide for my *I* in the mirror. I showed him the way to a small window in the upper corner of the room, a window without a view. The window was tailored especially for suicide. My *I* in the mirror had a point: if I don't kill myself as well, he will be incapable of leaving. My *I* in the mirror is close to the phoenix.

5

I covered my heart with a bullet-proof metal and fired the pistol, aiming at the left side of the mirror. The bullet dug into the left of his chest but his heart was on the right.

6

Red spilled from the dummy heart. In my dream (the one I was late for) I was condemned to capital punishment. I did not control my dream. It is a serious crime that separates people who can't shake hands.

*translated by Jung Yul Yu and James Kimbrell*

REAR WINDOW

*for Grace Kelly*

Love is a hovering, a deafening  
batting of lashes. It presses

its lips to the opaque  
blotting paper before breaking  
and entering — a vision

suspended in moonlight, a museum

piece, a nude

summer hue. Love's petal-  
starched dresses rustle in the under-  
brush; its white cotton gloves

erase their own incriminating  
traces. A lady

keeps her suitor guessing.

No matter the apparatus:  
a handbag, a snifter, a pinch  
in his drink,

a cinch

at the waist, an intellect trimmed  
like a smart pillbox hat.

A lady proposes

a dangerous abetting  
and proves her authenticity  
by how easily

she bruises. Love is a cut-  
up, a close-up,

a hovering.

This kiss is exquisitely  
scripted and its twin

is terror.

## BLACKBERRY PIE

The man my mother  
takes to the barn  
while I carve the other one  
his second slice.

Thick-scented,  
slick, peddling  
jesus or magazines.  
Like wood-

pussy. How they come  
to the door. Dumb  
as full-blown  
balloons and as thin-

skinned. Under  
the eaves the spun  
gray paper funnel sips  
hornets

through its delicate  
orifice. The nest she says  
we leave out of pity.  
The loose barn

letting go  
a sharp-billed cry  
the way a jay's naked  
call becomes his own

tormentor.  
Coffee grows  
scum. The pie  
ticking down. Its vee



spreads, deepens, draws  
untold black lace  
houseflies. Strains  
of laughter and this boy half

listening, half-cocked, necktie  
riding his throat, his dish  
licked clean. The sweet  
tooth of what they back

into. Her barn, her fat  
pocket, the staggering  
buzz, what I wear  
underneath.

THE WOMEN'S PRISON

*So who saved me? And for what purpose?*

— Larry Levis

The women in the prison  
are combing black plastic heads of hair  
for Beauty Care.

It's cold in there  
a prison necklace of noose and lies

— I threw away the knife,  
but I *knew* it would be found.

— She told me ways  
to stop the constant noise:  
Branchwater. Snow. *Better* than life.

Oh ghost women, oh  
ghost Larry Levis,  
who wouldn't save you?  
And for what purpose.

SPIRITUAL ALPHABET IN MIDSUMMER

*The various states of soul in a man must be like the letters in a dictionary, some of which are powerfully and voluminously developed, others having only a few words under them — but the soul must have a complete alphabet.*

— Kierkegaard, in his diary

A

This is the finger of God:

gnat-swarm in fruitbowl, torn  
flap of plumskin  
riddled with them, blackberry  
vinegar, in its open decanter,  
thick with swimming gnats —

I walk through the house, laughing  
lines from Exodus (I'm teaching  
the Bible as Literature  
for extra money): *There  
came gnats  
on man and beast, all the dust  
of the earth became gnats,  
and the magicians said,*

*This is the finger of God . . .*

Hyssop dipped in lamb's blood,  
hail and fire in thunder, Raid  
Flying Insect Killer's  
pillar of cloud over the stove, *I will smite  
the land of Egypt —*

Jehovah's Witness once at the door,  
fat hellflames lapping at the Watchtower cover:  
*Lotsa people they think Hell*

*is hot—;*  
*but Hell's not hot, it's not, it's not . . .*

Merciful  
God, of temperate  
Hell, harden  
our hearts, this summer, so that signs  
and wonders

may be multiplied —  
Deadly  
nightshade twined around the raspberry canes —

We lick  
raspberry juice  
from each other's fingers. Black  
vinegar swirling down the disposal, compost  
bin's sweet reek of fruit,

dead gnats dropped on the microwave,  
finger of God  
on everything, its

smudged, unmistakable print . . .

*B*

In the year of our Lord one thousand  
three hundred and seventy-three,  
Julian of Norwich, *living*  
*in this mortal flesh,*  
felt her spiritual eyes slip open

and she gazed on Christ,  
enthroned inside her  
*(a delectable and restful sight) —*

serene, implacable, eternally  
holding court there  
as if her soul *were a kingdom*  
*and a fine city —*

Monday, in a dream, mine  
was laid bare: hushed  
attic room, unfinished, hot,

abandoned window fan's rusted blades  
blocking the crawlspace  
I kept crawling through,

and frizzled wires  
at the end of each passage  
hissed and sizzled, sputtering  
fire —

*And soon afterwards all was hidden*  
*and I saw no more.*

## C

To learn the spirit's alphabet, its spells

of heat and freezing,  
I have to find my way beyond the vowels,  
mellifluous containers of desire:  
the real work waits in the consonants,  
oilslick along the inside of the drum,

smirched smell of what's not usable, not saved.

*The self says, I am,  
says Roethke,  
the heart says, I am less,  
the spirit says, You are nothing.*

To be nothing, in summer, when sweetpeas  
wind strangling around their stick,  
when my hollyhocks lift their stalks —  
ladder-spoked with pink blooms — as high as the roof

(My place in the world  
that is not my place) —

when everything stakes and stakes  
its extravagant  
claim to being

through rarer and more complicated forms of beauty . . .

To be nothing, and to want to be that,  
diminished and joyed in diminishment,

like the catarrhal  
rasp of the poppy's seedpods

hollowed on cracked stems and spewing  
thousands of invisible

seeds on the wind that distributes  
also their long, deceptive

death-rattle from the dry stalks . . .

*D*

*The whole of existence*

*frightens me,*  
Kierkegaard wrote in his diary,  
*from the smallest*  
*fly to the mystery*  
*of the Incarnation . . .*

So Serrano's *Piss Christ*: divinity  
suspended in human

waste, the nailed body bubbling  
down through urine-filtered, mystic

gold-red light,  
Incarnation as willed submersion

in what even the flesh rejects —  
Kafka's diary: *the joy*

*again of imagining*  
*a knife twisted in my heart . . .*

## E

Twisted knife, dirge-prayer:  
watering the starved  
garden, the slugs'  
beer-traps dried up,

drizzle of slug-trail along the sweet basil's plot . . .

## F

O inhabitant of the Earth,

August melancholia, insomnia, dog days  
hazed in gray. Tetris



at 3 a.m., in-between  
Genesis chapters in *God: A Biography* —  
in both, the compulsive  
filling-up of the empty. Anhedonic  
god, domesticated  
in his desert tent, sniffing the wind  
for the scent of burnt meat —

His obsession with us, His spirit-life  
— rage, wrath, jealousy, vengeance,  
displeasure and pride,

never rejoicing — *God does not rejoice . . .*

Who turned to make  
no other world,  
mad to remain in this one, desert and flood —

I wonder  
what He wants from me now,  
3 a.m., up thinking  
how useless I am, how dull, reading  
*I will smelt away your dross . . .*

— Pleasureless  
Lord of Hosts, what remorse, what envy,  
stirs in You now,  
as in me,

what scrutiny by the dim nightlamp . . .

## G

Flute music whose source  
I can't find  
somewhere inside the mazes

of the purple rose garden —  
its trills and slow stops, blown  
impositions of order —

while on the sidewalk someone's boombox  
buzzes news of the bombed-down plane  
in Long Island Sound, 230 dead,  
scubadivers descending through the lashed  
surf to the black box.

### *H*

So the tares and the wheat  
must grow up together  
in their rows, before the harvest,

*lest in gathering the tares  
you root up the wheat along with them . . .*

Artist's sketch,  
in the paper, of the child-rapist:  
paroled, then driven  
from town to town,  
bearded, gaunt-faced, grief-eyed, like  
the face of Christ in children's  
illustrated Bibles . . .

### *I*

*How are the dead raised, with what  
body do they come?:*

David Gee has willed his skin  
to a tattoo artist, all  
seventeen square feet of it, in magenta  
and pink and brown

serpents and bulls and bats,  
(\$33,000 worth of tattoos,  
500 hours under the humming knife)

with the one stipulation that it be stripped,  
tanned, and permanently displayed

*So that people continue to see me after I'm dead —*

— St. Bartholomew,  
in the Last Judgment,  
brandishes a knife and trails his flayed skin

on which Michelangelo has painted his own face,  
elongated and grotesque in the folds of the pelt . . .

Self-portrait as shucked flesh,  
dragged to the judgment:  
Bartholomew glowers, knife aimed at Christ,  
or at the Virgin, who recoils  
from the damned gnawed by demons, or else  
from the raised, damning hand of her Son —

Shall we haul  
the flayed skin into paradise  
(angels flying the cross  
and sponge and pillar of flagellation)

*as long as people continue to see me  
after I'm dead*

The wrinkled face in the pelt,  
the serpent's tongue tattooed behind the ear?

*Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom,  
nor does the perishable  
inherit the imperishable . . .*

J

Lo, I tell you a mystery:

three thousand embryos, frozen in nitrogen,  
unclaimed for five years at in-vitro clinics,

are slated for destruction today  
with a drop of alcohol on each . . .

*We live in samsara*

*and spacing out about nirvana  
doesn't help anyone, says*

a teenaged Tibetan lama

who's joined a Wyoming street gang  
(if some butthead pulls a gun on His holiness,  
you can bet some bodyguard's  
gonna pop a cap  
in his ass)

who, between homework and Little League and chores,  
sneaks in his spiritual counseling,  
*sucking out the bad air  
and breathing in the pure*

*like an air conditioning repair dude . . .*

Pure air, frozen  
nitrogen, three thousand  
embryos each the size of a grain of sand . . .

*A wholly desacralized cosmos,  
I read in Eliade,  
is a recent discovery  
in the history of the human spirit.*

K

By the boathouse's  
rotted pylons,  
starfish wallow in low runnels of surf —

when I jab them  
with a stick, they clutch it

to their nubbed bodies, trying to take it in . . .

So the numinous  
closes around whatever  
phenomena happen to stab it,

and clutches,  
piece by piece of its star . . .

L

*A universe seething with life  
billions of years ago —*

NASA on the radio, carbonate  
globules in a meteor

from Mars, Earth itself  
seeded by supernal life, perhaps —

We hear it as we drive to the Ballard Locks,  
where the sockeyes

hurl their battered bodies up the fish-ladder,  
its 23 steps, artificial falls

that repel and attract their surge.  
In the Viewing Room, the salmon

beat their way uptide, through a tank of churned bubbles  
like Serrano's four-gallon tub of urine,

haunted by its plastic crucifix:  
god who can't leave matter alone, descending

into what craves  
transcendence —

and our urge  
upward to return to the place

of our spawning —  
*universe seething with life — the sockeyes,*

skin ripped, muscles taut with leaping, fight  
to spew eggs and milt in a gravel run, where hunks

of flesh will drop off  
in the stream where the smolts came from,

once the starved, gill-heaving spawners have driven,  
having smelled their way back to its rock.

## M

Mystery of the Incarnation:

*in my short Pilgrimage,  
wrote Cotton Mather,  
tormenting Pains in my Teeth and Jawes*

*have produced mee many a sad Hour —*

He dedicated that pain  
*to search and try his Wayes:*

confessing his gluttony, the evil speech  
that passed those teeth,  
everything razed  
by spiritual scrutiny . . .

And the dull  
hollow in my jaw  
where a rotten wisdom-tooth

was plucked last week:  
painkiller haze, the holy stupor  
in front of the TV,

Jeffrey Dahmer on A&E, his barrels of skulls  
and rotting genitals  
while I thumbed, mind dulled, through Kafka:

*this heap of straw  
I have been for five months . . .  
to die would mean nothing more  
than to surrender a nothing  
to nothing . . .*

The mystery of the Incarnation:  
chemotherapy pumps, angioplastm  
balloons,

plastic skull in the oral surgeon's office,  
blinking white tooth-lights  
like Christmas  
around its sunken jaw . . .

N

In my short pilgrimage  
through July,



the heat-cracked windshield  
of the Mazda,  
the cut grocery budget, reruns  
of Seinfeld

*filled with the Devotions and Enjoyments  
of a raised Soul . . .*

O

*Why does this generation  
seek a sign:  
Cross-shaped*

blister of sunlight  
photographed over a cove  
just before three Catholic children

drowned there in riptide: its white  
trail of bisecting lights  
hung, grained-out and glowing, over the beach . . .

At the soup kitchen, the volunteers  
crowd around a blown-up  
print of it, souvenir from the funeral:

*I just don't agree it's the Angel  
of Death waiting  
to get them,*

one volunteer grimly shakes her head,  
*I don't think it's Death,  
it's Jesus . . .*

P

Walking the dogs,  
talking about graces and sins,  
docetic heresy and Incarnation,  
plastic bags of scooped dogshit  
swinging in our hands.

Q

*Enough is so vast a sweetness,*

Dickinson says,  
*I suppose it never occurs —  
only pathetic Counterfeits —*

Its counterfeits  
sate me: stray  
Brittany smeared with raspberry  
juice, bunches of arugula  
and collards, "O  
Divine Redeemer," Suzanne,  
eating blueberry pie and rereading the Bardo,

it feels so real while Enough  
recedes, recedes, hazing . . .

R

RIVERS OF BLOOD IN ATLANTA —

— headlines  
ecstatic in their newspaper boxes:  
pipe bomb at the Olympics  
while the Heart Attacks played,  
a hundred wounded by shrapnel, newsman

dead from heart  
failure as he ran toward the blast . . .

In an antique store, beside  
porno photos from the '40s  
(bare breast under boutonniere)  
lies the Sacred Heart of Jesus

in a gilt frame: exposed  
from His side, the barbed-  
wired and viscid pink heart, a cross  
stabbed into it.

*In and through adoration of the physical  
heart, the threefold*

*love is adored —*

Grease-smell on the hot sidewalk.  
We go for margaritas in an empty bar,  
her foot in my lap, stroking  
my cock as CNN  
interrogates the bombsite witnesses,

and the black box  
from TWA  
is hauled up at last: static  
and bomb-blast and static . . .

Down the block, a hamburger joint  
called the Hardened Artery  
has another heart on its billboard:

fat, lurid, fed  
by rivers of slowed  
blood

## S

*I implore that my Work may be sprinkled  
with the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ:*

So Cotton Mather begged God  
*with daily Cries*  
that the publishers should want his Church History . . .

— Reading, alongside Mather, my own galleys,  
fretting about what the blurbs would say,  
what the editors would say,  
what the reviews would say,  
every night another dream:  
*Piss-Christ* on the cover, or my mother's quilt  
(in the dream I write it as *guilt*)

or inksmeas where the blurbs should be —

## T

Book of Merits, Book of Faults,  
blackened by centuries of candlesmoke:  
in the Last Judgment, the fresco's

angels eternally unroll the scrolls,  
and the Blessed  
quiver to hear their names.

Versions of the holy —  
*my agent*  
*has three manuscripts of mine, she really thinks I'm hot,*

*you know*  
*it's a prestigious award I've just won . . .*

My back  
jacket, filled in with its praise

*sprinkled with the Blood  
of the Lord Jesus Christ*

— Starfish  
wallow in their crack of rock, wrap  
their five arms

around whatever seems to them like food . . .

U

Envy: two slugs on a mound  
of fresh dogshit,  
chewing their way back to the ground.

V

If you checked Box 32A, you MUST file Form 2981;  
statutory employees, see  
page 35, section c

Halfway through Schedule A, 1040  
extension till today, and the mail  
brings another mortgage increase  
and the annual *No*  
*appropriated funds for salary raises* —  
and I'm hunched again over the crabbed  
figures on our budget  
(\$960 extra mortgage payments  
minus \$750 Bible as Lit  
income)  
barely  
listening to the bootleg  
tape of Flannery O'Connor

in Chicago, 1960: *to track the Holy Ghost  
through a tangle of human suffering,  
aspiration, and idiocy . . .*

Deducting infertility,  
tithes, cystomeatotomy, psycho-  
tropic drugs —

You MUST attach  
extension

*Shut up, Bobby Lee, it's  
no real pleasure in life . . .*

## W

*For admiring myself,*

*I loathe myself,*  
Michael Wigglesworth wrote in his diary.  
The unspeakable

conversation of judgment:  
In the Sistine Chapel, St. Peter  
cocks the round barrel of his enormous  
key to the kingdom  
and aims it straight at Christ

*(I don't think it's Death it's Jesus)*  
who floats  
in His yellow bubble,  
hand raised in a gesture  
of benediction, or damnation, I'm never

sure which. *Munday I found pride  
monstrously prevailing;*

*Tuesday so much secret  
joying in myself, plague-sores  
running day and night . . .*

— All August,  
staring at Michelangelo's judging  
angels, eyes rolled up in their heads,  
I loathe

myself for my self-loathing . . .  
These accounts I can't keep  
keeping: sins  
deducted from graces, rejections  
subtracted from publications

*So that people continue to see me  
after I'm dead —*

Book of Faults  
with a fissure down its middle, as though  
the wall itself couldn't bear  
the weight of its blame . . .

Lord,  
raise Your hand to me now, uncurl it slowly

*(It's not Death it's Jesus)*

release me from judgment till the end of my days . . .

X

In my Father's house, so many closed-up rooms.  
Such slitted attic windows where I find



myself, gazing downward at the garden,  
its stunted boles and chewed leaves,

sunflash on the washed and dented Mazda.  
In dust-shaft light, dim

buzzings deep in the rafters, over rusted  
nails, a cracked jar. Kingdom and fine city.

Lord, rouse yourself for me now, in this sealed  
heat, mildewed air, where the soul

hoards its gatherings through the smudged  
dust of half a summer, forgotten

souvenirs, windows  
gold with another year's pollen . . .

Sizzle of shorted  
wires, spark-flash

like firefly in the far loft: even  
here, Lord, in this stagnant attic,

you're nested, driven, swarming  
under damp shingles

to a chambered and nectared hive.

Y

Liquidation Used Cars'  
garbled billboard: *No Credit Check You*  
*Qualify    No Cure for Birth*  
*& Death Except*

*Enjoy Whats Inbetween —*

Used  
cars: oilslick  
under our old  
Mazda, the buyer's child  
squealing *Mommy Mommy it's*  
*leaking it's leaking*  
the truck  
in a traffic jam with *Eli*  
*Eli lama sabachthani*  
scrawled in its windows' crusted mud —

Liquidation: Monarch  
butterfly lit  
on a rotted possum at creekside. TWA  
pilot Kevorkian hauled up  
from the sea, the plane's  
wreckage on the news again, reassembled  
piece by blasted piece. Jack  
Kevorkian, Doctor of Death,  
wheeling his 35th victim in,

chronically exhausted, three hundred pounds,  
painkiller-addicted, beaten  
by her husband for wanting to die . . .

*Whats inbetween: wild*  
blueberry jam's sweet  
foam and scum on the stove,  
Suzanne, mashing  
the berries, her head  
thrown back to sing *Libiamo,*  
*la fuggevol ora*  
*s'inebrii a voluttá . . .*

Z

How secret  
the overlay  
of the sacred — tracks  
of the Holy Ghost

by the dredged  
harbor, the gnarled  
and peeled madronas.  
Everywhere I look, even

in Andres Serrano's  
photographs of the morgue: the lush  
scarlets and clumped blacks  
of the burn victims' skins,

their hands  
blotched with fingerprint ink,  
the pictures laid end to end, fingers  
almost touching, like God

and Adam in Michelangelo's Creation,  
the divine spark reimagined  
as flesh-charring. So  
*kenosis*: God's

emptying himself of divinity  
to take on this malleable  
body. Piece  
by blasted piece,

the profaned  
days are hauled up again,  
barnacled and briny,

glinting as they sink  
back. Twenty-first  
Sunday in Ordinary Time:  
I bless myself, and move on,  
holy water dripping from my fingers.

*Summer 1996*

## NOTES

A. In Exodus, God “hardens the heart” of Pharaoh in order to manifest His wonders through a series of plagues against the Egyptians.

B. The quotations from Julian of Norwich are from her *Showings*.

F. Tetris, the popular video game, is played by arranging a series of rapidly falling geometric shapes into orderly rows.

H. The parable of the tares and the wheat is found in Matthew 13.

I. The quotations that begin and end the section are St. Paul from I Corinthians 15, as is “Lo, I tell you a mystery” at the beginning of the next section.

J. Excerpts from an interview with Pema Jones, the teenaged lama, appear in *Harper’s Magazine*, August 1996.

M. The quotations from Cotton Mather and from Franz Kafka are from their diaries.

N. “Filled with the Devotions and Enjoyments of a raised Soul” is from Cotton Mather’s diary.

O. The opening quotation is from Mark 8:12.

P. Docetic heresy is the belief that Christ only appeared to have a physical body but in fact was purely spiritual.

Q. The Emily Dickinson quotation is from one of her letters.

R. The quotation is from a description of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, from the Catholic Encyclopedia.

W. Michael Wigglesworth was a 17th century Massachusetts Puritan. The quotations from him here are from his diaries.

Y. “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani” (“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me”) are the words of Christ on the cross in Matthew 27:46.

The final quotation is from Verdi’s *La Traviata*: “Let’s drink . . . the fleeing hour yields to pleasure’s intoxication.”

Z. Ordinary Time constitutes the parts of the Catholic liturgical year in between the sacramental seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Easter.

DIALOGUE: 14TH CENTURY

*Doesn't hope have doors and windows? Not blood like mucky sea water, not locked joints, a life prayer-stained and silent.*

Underfoot the heartbeat of stones, overhead, the gray rain pawing the roof. Here, there are too many mice for one cat. My mouth feeds on dust and the smell of mould.

*Still, in utter darkness the great din sings in my ear.*

Soon enough I'll be bone shale, with less than this bit of straw for warmth. Unable to hear the falling leaves scratching the walk. To see the moon's borrowed light cooling the trees. Will the cold still scrape then? Will the simple snow cross like an army to find me in my shallow bed? So painful such coming down, such rare whiteness hunched above the heavy, wet earth.

*Do you believe in the clemency of words?*

*Do you keep your love in a pocket of your throat?*

All these years I've known the only way out is to seal up the doors.

Let the bread rest in its wooden bowl . . . let the dried rose lose its red grip . . . let the darkness swallow our smiles and teeth, and the flecks of moonlight dress us.



THE VENTRILOQUIST

The voice in me nearly jumping out like wine when  
the elbow knocks the cup — I thought surely everyone  
could hear it, but I was saved

by the fact that no one listens, each hearing  
voices of his own. Each having a nicknamed emptiness, a little  
dog  
kept inside.

How free we are to be shadows then, and  
innocent deceivers.

The animals have come down the desert mountains  
in the June drought.

*No water*, comes a voice from the house, from the next,  
but they aren't listening —  
They are watching the moon slide on its face. It's a fact

I was prayer itself, prayer skin-walking, prayer sinking,  
loudmouthed, cursing, dummy on its lap. When I said,  
*The rosemary gets too much sun*, I meant, *Save what I love*.  
Or when I said, *My back aches* or *The coffee is wonderful*  
or *No, I haven't done much writing lately* or *Is someone*  
*at the door?* or *I could eat nothing but plums the rest of my life*,  
or *Not now*, or *Yes, right now*, anything

I uttered was a dry dust off  
my lungs. Brown birds walk our bad land's scatter of granite,  
beaks parted, mouth-breathers.  
I am sorry for the thirst of this world.  
Even the world can't drink itself at will.

It must be love it is so like.  
The coyote is out on the street thinking, The riverbed has moved.



The actual river is there too, mumbling,  
Yes, the bed must be somewhere in this valley.

And when a river talks  
you still will not know the fat-child-faith of my heart.

## ONCE A SHOOT OF HEAVEN

Even when you see through the lies, the lies they  
fed you as a child, you  
believe some of it, still, when you drift  
from thinking. When the air's true and simple  
like a sheet you've laundered for as long

as you can remember, and your mother before you. There was  
an end,  
and a beginning, and love, and wrong and right and  
someone who loved the world and someone who did not  
and someone who made the moon and the moon that just was.  
Always.

Now there's a white disappearing brow at the edge of September,  
usual stars.

A siren sets off a dog.

A car radio flies down the road.

In between the acacias tick, tick in a lightness not yet wind.

The early bird is asleep.

The world still isn't safe for democracy.

There was a mother and a father and a child and an hour  
and exactly so many minutes, and left and right,  
and people who ascended like doves and people  
who slept in the earth, and apples that could make you strong  
and sugar that could make you weak, and people who burned.

And tonight you still talk to someone who is not there, not  
yourself — crazy promises, little pleas, momentary

thanksgivings. This no one who has never been there  
is like the cat who only went away they said

to live and raise a family in the Christensons' barn. So there was

the one who went on living forever and the one you realized  
could not live forever.

Here there's the sound of a neighbor dragging his trash cans  
down the driveway to the curb. No one on this street sleeps.

The crickets are poor not lucky.

The ear might as well be gold.

## MONEY

It is wrong to stay here and talk forever, the sack of thunder  
over the black mountains still cinched, a shudder

and a batting of violet. The late monsoon wanders, nods off.  
The nights clear and the stars know where to cut.  
I have not moved. The voice wheedles out of its smallness  
fondling each pitch, up

against the thigh of some death. Who can understand  
the misery of the finch, this one

summer just ebbing has been its whole year,  
the first coolness, the first mother-death, time's so  
bird-fast.

And I, I who was born with a fascinated tongue,  
sit bare-kneed in the eclipse, the moon

coppers until its cradle cap — so white — slips back  
to be the strange chip Mongolia must see,  
its people just rising — that mirror hour

fainting into frank blueness. Knowing two things at  
one time is the endless money of the distance,

and the dream of a perfect match  
for your mouth, your nature, your breeding season,  
is your

crush on the down of night, the fall  
coming. I wish

to be hunted and found, and found, shot, and  
shot, rocked with grief and bandaged, and bandaged,  
given time.

## SINCE I HAVE LIVED

Since I have lived in the desert all summer I've learned  
the sound closest to water is the slush of the rabbit  
through dead blossoms beneath the oleander.  
Next to this, paper. Next,  
cars.

I am thinking of the black tongue of the king snake near the shed.  
Also the black tongue of your cancered mother —

All the nurses gave us  
was a small sponge on a stick  
to swab her lips. And finally nothing to do  
but tell her, tell her it was all right.

We were devils and angels.  
We were wrong, but wrong in the face of helplessness is right.  
To do the only thing. And since I have lived

with you, the newly-dead's son. The long-dead's, the  
childhood's cut rope. The sound of your sleep is like

sipping the house. The house is dry, dry  
and the shortest night of the year is coming  
and I'll sleep all morning and I'll take

time and put its one leg in one leg of my pants  
and my leg in the other. I'll be alive  
since rising at last is what the living do —

Outside, all down the dry wash rocks spark.  
A bird breaks out in the air like a buoyant door.

Which cracks wide my head. Good,  
since the ratio of land to water is changing,

and candelabras to fish. Such is wishing, my desert, such  
is willing, that for the moment  
everything we do metes out  
justice. As when the nurse didn't come,

my father told me how to insert the catheter  
in him, and when he asked  
did it embarrass me I said no it did not  
embarrass me. For I was at last  
given the instruction, given the task to do,  
the words to follow, the devil to pay.

The sound of my breath the sound of an upside down cup.

FOUR DAYS OF RAIN

Face of a girl taped up around town.  
I open the door of the 7-11,  
pull her toward me, then let her  
drop. Gone like the towns  
beneath the reservoir. Streets,  
places erased. A man in front of me  
is buying scratch tickets. Can't decide  
between Black Jack and Lucky Ride.  
Scratch them someplace no one can see.  
Throw the ticket out the window.  
Rub the next one. Watch the number come up  
from beneath your finger.  
What you were hoping to see  
stares back at you, or doesn't.  
You see them alongside the road,  
windows already scratched out,  
paper bent in two.  
Think you could follow them  
back to the person's house.  
Some people imagine the flooded towns  
lifting out of the reservoir.  
That you can see one of the steeples  
when the season is dry.  
Water goes to Boston  
and they drink from us.  
Four years ago, my friend's ashes  
in the water, chips  
flashing at us as they sank.  
I drive home past the Mickey Mouse  
with the windmill belly.  
Past the plaster ducks, the Virgin  
in half a tub, and the pair  
of giant red heart balloons  
on the front porch of the gift shop  
across from the fruit stand



where my check bounced.  
Hearts in the window  
big as buoys, as if the heart  
was a bladder you could inflate at will.  
If this rain went on raining.  
If this reservoir spilled.

## NOBODY DROWNED

It's the green river of a childhood  
in which nobody drowned.  
No legs were broken.  
None were shot though once  
the shotgun went off in the house  
three inches from the brother's head.  
Someone's father hung himself in a red barn.  
Sucking her thumb in third grade,  
one girl pulled her hair out by the roots;  
she was bald at the crown,  
but nobody drowned.  
A drunk father wearing ice skates  
driving a tractor was hauling  
a wagonload of children behind him.  
There was one divorced mother  
who smoked and had three names.  
Teacher smacked a boy's head  
against the wall.  
Six cows were hit by lightning,  
one run over by a truck,  
three killed by dogs.  
Two trucks turned over, a tractor  
rolled down hill, crashed  
into the woods  
but nobody drowned.  
The brothers and sisters  
chopped the heads off chickens,  
hung frogs on wire fences.  
They leaped from second floor  
windows, practicing how to fall.  
Sometimes the father pounded them.  
Sometimes they pounded each other,  
but nobody drowned.  
One boy stuck another boy's foot  
to the floor of a silage wagon

with a pitchfork, and the girls  
rode their horses  
into the river. Hands buried  
in manes, pressed against  
wet flanks, they floated  
in the green river  
bank to bank, and nobody  
drowned.

## THE FUNK OF THOSE ACRES

What looks back at you from the woods.  
From somewhere in the field.  
It was not your province so you  
couldn't flee. Impatient,  
you wanted to shake the trees  
and make them come out.  
Wanted to snap the snow, make them  
appear in their tracks.  
What looks back from the hole  
at the center of the tree.  
What moves is edible if it were visible.  
Bare palm of a mole  
in the snow, mangled fur.  
You held it in your glove, small nails  
at the end of each finger. What moved.  
What was found out, was a small red heart  
running across snow, sweet meat in the mouth.  
What's been here but isn't any longer.  
Think if you stare long enough  
at the landscape, something will step into the field.  
Come to graze off the dead.  
To eat the bittersweet draped tree to tree.  
That you are looking at them but can't see them;  
they stand in the field and are the same color  
as the field. As the trunks of trees.  
As the breath from your mouth.  
You think you will see them walk towards you.  
Shake the stick in the snow,  
and nothing moves. Clap. Shout.  
Wave the grain bucket and whistle.  
You walk through the field singing  
and only you moving.  
You like thinking about where they might be.  
Imagine the funk of those acres.  
Hair on the trees, on the wind.

That the warmth of their bodies  
melts small black patches beneath them.  
That they move when you move and they watch you.

LIES

Anyone can get it wrong, laying low  
when she ought to lie, but is it a lie  
for her to say she laid him when we know  
he wouldn't lie still long enough to let  
her do it? A good lay is not a song,  
not anymore; a good lie is something  
else: lyrics, lines, what if you say *dear sister*  
when you have no sister, what if you say *guns*  
when you saw no guns, though you know  
they're there? *She laid down her arms; she lay*  
*down, her arms by her sides.* If we don't know,  
do we lie if we say? If we don't say, do we lie  
down on the job? To arms! in any case,  
dear friends. If we must lie, let's not lie around.

## SIDES

All you need is two and an angle, a side  
is just a line in need of connection, but if  
you move a line to the side it's a side,  
a side with two sides, front and back, in  
and out, depending on what's around (another  
story, *around*) to give it depth. Myself,  
I'm on the shy side, from my mother's side,  
I sleep on my side — I mean it comes from in-  
side, we *have* sides, this business of taking  
sides. Though how we draw our side lines,  
and how we get from opposition's under,  
other, out, is less clear. Could we simply  
*be* sides, no angles, right or otherwise,  
just siding with, beside, not out or in?



## CUTS

A mother holds a girl's legs,  
another mother cuts the lips, nips

the tiny bud, she sews, she leaves  
a little buttonhole for him

to open up someday, her hands  
are washed in blood.

\*

. . . the rhythm  
of gray, her hand

in her hair,  
hand on my hair  
as I start to sleep

\*

Her mother cannot write the name  
she gave her on the envelope.  
His mother calls her *her* name.

His sister writes what once was him  
and someone else, which someone's  
name was his, except for s.

\*

Be very happy, friends  
said. In college they learned

to buy washing machines, to plan  
ahead, meat in the oven, knives

on the table an inch from the edge.  
Also a little French.

\*

. . . her hand  
in my hair as I start  
to sleep

they're doing it  
in hospitals now

sterile knives inch  
toward the edge

\*

Meanwhile, an airplane's home  
from work. It's had a busy

day, it says, what a load, bombs  
bombs bombs, but right

on target, boom, and now  
it's hungry, fill it up.

\*

. . . who rules the roost-  
er roaster roast French  
hen chickie pie

be very happy, they learned  
to write, white words  
to buy washing machines, knives  
on the button an inch  
from the edge

bound in the oven, boots  
on the ledge

\*

A busy day, an en-  
velope, it's his to open, boom  
boom boom, her hands  
are washed it's  
hungry, fill it up.

\*

Hold a girl's  
legs cut  
the lips nip  
the bud blood dud

This is the It  
Kit and this is Dad  
and Mother cannot write  
the name he gave her

THE PARROT

Even seeing it myself, I hardly believed it:  
how the parrot mated for life  
with the woman. How she wore it  
on her head like a hat. How still  
it sat, how inanimate —

like this stuffed parrot in the painting —  
perched on what looks like a real  
branch of a tree. Not just leaf-  
colored, like the parrots that have to blend in  
in a jungle, but various shades of leaves and sun  
and lipstick.

"When I die," the old woman said to her son,  
"please don't stuff me." Now where  
did she get an idea like that?  
After she died, her parrot repeated  
every word she'd ever said to her lover,  
and every word he'd ever said to her —

not in their voices, or course, but we  
who heard it liked to believe  
it was. It was strange, almost sad  
how we wanted to think the parrot  
understood every word that it said.  
Just as you'd like to think this red-

tailed parrot was really there. Was not  
just some dusty mummy  
of a bird in a museum,  
but alive, always, about to fly or say  
something: one wing lifted, its beak wide open.

## TWO RATS

Not cute, like the gray baby  
rat that somehow ate all the cheese  
from my friend's trap, and escaped  
and kept coming back. No, these are truly  
rats: large, slant-eyed; having already eaten  
a hollow into the large round cheese  
on the cracked floor.

They squat. Their humped backs  
perfect aggression.  
What would we do without them:  
skittering, squeaking,  
like every guilty thought  
we ever had;  
someone, a shadow, not us, running around  
the basement.

## ROCKS WITH OAK TREES

*(after reading Heidegger)*

So let us see. We have the rocks in the sand  
which are things, as the artist is not.  
Not as the things are, that is.

In the middle of these rocks is grass which  
looks like flames. That is not to say that it is  
flames. But that we say it looks so, therefore  
it is not real, though we may think different.

The rock is a thing. The artist is not.  
That is how we can tell the difference between them.  
Even if he were to sit at the top of the hill  
leaning over like one of these trees, he would not be.

The thing as it is is not as you think it. That is  
the itness of it. The itness of what is, not the thingness.  
If I saw the philosopher halfway up the hill  
I would not say, there sits a rock. I would not say

there is the thinker. Even if the whole scene  
could never have existed without him. Because  
of the nature of his being, which is,  
as you read this, as it ever was,

something with properties, possibly human,  
with much of the thingness of rocks, that is  
the way they repeat themselves, how they show  
us what they are; we who are not them, who never

wanted to *be* them, as round, as irregular  
as they are, with such countenances,  
almost like art. Almost human.

## STONE BENCH IN A GARDEN

Just a large slab on two short, powerful legs  
but that day he painted the legs with feet  
as if the bench could get up and walk, taking  
him (as he sat there) with it. As he felt  
the earth might sweep him away  
when the critics wrote he was great:  
raising their arms to the sky (he pictured)  
like those two huge trees on each side  
of the bench, guarding it.

What would happen? What if the punishment  
of the gods was to take away how you saw  
things — as the scarlet in those trees seemed blinding  
that day? He wanted to go back  
to the way it was the first time he painted it:  
the bench just a bench. The leaves  
of the trees massive, but the trunks slender —  
in fact you could see how some had three or four  
trunks; not just one; not just one painter . . .

He wanted to sit on the bench: small. Tiny.  
So maybe the gods wouldn't see him.  
Thinking how cool and green  
the garden had been that day.  
How all the lines in the painting pointed up —  
but calmly. How there were roots  
under that grass, under the bench;  
under his feet — so he wouldn't be swept away  
by the gods. By all that beauty.



LEAVING THE METRO

We ride the escalator up into pigeons —  
helix of dishrags banking around Dupont.  
The bucket guy drums, night's bad dog

slinking in. We've argued the whole way  
home. I'm angry, I stop paying attention  
and that does it — *go die* you say in Chinese,

then louder, slapping the back of my head.  
It's not New York; people stare — lawyers  
scenting the kill. Is this how it happened —

Orpheus turning, yellow mouthful of sky  
above them, smell of more snow on the way?

## HYPOCHONDRIA

Cicadas fizz in the apple trees. My heart  
stutters and drags. The new mole on my chest  
says *wait, just wait*. The hemlocks say *Father*,

and pray in their jade hoods. What I dream  
is a white room, scrubbed light. What I know  
about love, I could write with my tongue

on your palm. Tonight, like most nights,  
I wake up at three, unsure if I've taken my pills.  
I think of our last kiss, and my throat burns.

I think of your touch, and a dark text blooms  
on my skin. The doctors will weigh my balls  
on delicate scales, press their lips to my belly

and blow. I'll tell them you're swimming around  
in my blood. In the small owls and night jars,  
the slow rain, the darkness closing its rusty gates.

## ILLNESS

Late December, dawn spreads like a rash  
above the parking lot. Venus smokes itself down,  
stubs itself out. The house is a whistle only I can hear —

all day, all night, the wind blowing its one low note  
(the windows shake in their sockets, the furnace  
hammers and moans). Three months in Provincetown

and I can't tell you what day it is, which way is East  
(nine hours of Vermeer's light, then sunset —  
menstrual smear in the sea). Now the breakwater

sucks its broken teeth. Snow fills the courtyard —  
it hates us, it knows when we're weak. 7:15, you're just  
waking up — your husband's arm across your hip.

Me? I never sleep. A gull keeps working its rusty hinge.  
The foghorn calls and calls to its tentacled mate.

## ADULTERY

April again, the wettest month —  
60 watts of daffodils beside the cedar trees,  
little agonies of resurrection. Still in bed,

I press my belly tight against your spine,  
cup your breast in my palm. My wife calls  
from D.C., sings "Happy Birthday"

after the beep. Soon, the white and yellow  
butterflies will fibrillate around the lawn;  
in secret tonight, the trees will all turn green

at once. This is better than the afterlife,  
its empty rooms, white light. Here,  
two slugs squeeze themselves across

the kitchen floor. Here, a woman could fall  
asleep in your bed, could dream the old dream:  
she's in the wrong house, can't find her clothes . . .

## DIVORCE

Half-moon. Squidlight. Fog hung like a bedsheet  
20 yards out. It's a long walk across the breakwater —  
gulls doze on the flats, hoping you'll die. Some nights

it's so beautiful here I drive to Hyannis, park at the mall —  
I can't take Truro's boarded cottages, bay gleaming like tar.  
I leave, I come back. It's the ocean that draws me —

some nights I want to lie down beyond the small waves,  
let the tide suck at my clothes. We leave and come back,  
leave and come back (black cat lolled in the courtyard —

Hart Crane, licking his paw). Still, I take my two  
white pills at night, write the same two poems again  
and again — only the landscapes change. This one's

snow on the beach, dune grass thin in its white scalp.  
Offshore, three or four right whales wheeze in the dark.  
Imagine, each breath held in deep water, held a long time.

Still how I hold you. Companion. Old ache in the lungs.

## POETRY 1996: A PARTIAL SURVEY

Since 1981, and in response to a scarcity of good reviews of poetry in newspapers and magazines, the editors of *FIELD* have attempted to write annual review-essays that would single out some notable books from the previous year. Over time, this task has proved to be both rewarding and difficult. It is rewarding to try to contribute to the ongoing conversation about poetic merit in our time. But keeping track of the books that have come out in a given year is very tricky. While we ask publishers for review copies, they don't all respond systematically and reliably, especially the larger houses (Knopf, Random House, Harper, Norton, Farrar Straus, Viking, etc.). Is that just us, or is it a more widespread pattern?

This year we have experimented with a variation. We sent a list of books published during 1996 to a number of our more regular contributors, and asked them to pick a favorite and write a brief response. Not everyone was able to say yes, but the acceptance rate was high and the enthusiasm for the project was heartening. The results and the list are collected below. What follows here is a brief consideration of the size of the problem facing this and similar enterprises, given the amount of poetry currently being published in this country, and some suggestions about other books that didn't get singled out in our roundup but that are, in our view, especially worthy of note.

### 1. *A kind of avalanche.*

Our list was based on one we got (acting on advice from someone at the Academy of American Poets) from Poets House in New York. Their list, created sometime in October, had about a hundred titles, and we were able to add about a dozen more. Since then, helpful respondents — David St. John, especially — have supplied another dozen, so that our current list (appended to this feature) is right around 125. A couple of titles even came from a newspaper announcement of the finalists for the Book Critics Circle Award. Our list is by no means complete, but anyone scanning it who is familiar with the current scene will be



struck by the number of well-known names and the general high quality of the work, even simply as implied by the publishers, titles and authors.

If you follow poetry reviewing, you can make a rough calculation of the low percentage of titles here that you've actually seen reviewed or that are likely eventually to be reviewed. They are the lucky few, and one would like to think they are the most worthy of notice, though that's not always clear. Who published you, whom you know or have influence with, whom your editor or publisher knows, what part of the country you're from (and/or residing in) — these have a good deal to do with who gets reviewed. Another poet once said that publishing a book of poems in the eighties and nineties was pretty much the same as throwing it out the window in the middle of the night.

The very size and quality of the list, while discouraging to working poets, should lay to rest some of the more extravagant forms of paranoia and conspiracy theories we tend to entertain. Who could conscientiously keep up with all this, and what journal, no matter how extensive its resources (space to print reviews, ability to commission and pay reviewers, wish to be fair, representative and wide-ranging), could hope to do justice to it? If, as someone has suggested, we are living in a great age of poetry, comparable to the Tang Dynasty, then we certainly don't seem to have the means to record and digest it. There is simply too much, too many good poets, a flood or landslide of books that, unless 1996 is anomalous (which we doubt), looks to continue unabated into the foreseeable future.

What goes for reviews goes for the prize-giving too. Did your book get overlooked for all the big prizes this year or last year or the year before? Perhaps you can take some comfort in the knowledge of the size of the crowd and the sheer difficulty of taking in all these books as part of an effort to discover the most worthy among them. That's not to say that the prize committees shouldn't try, and it has to be admitted that they often cut corners and play favorites on their way to a final decision. But it seems worth acknowledging here that if we had twenty-five or thirty big national prizes, instead of the five or six that get some media



attention, we still probably couldn't begin to cover the poetry that is worth honoring from this list.

2. *And three more worthy titles.*

In the pages that follow, Lee Upton discusses Eavan Boland, Alberta Turner writes about Fran Castan, Shirley Kaufman singles out Jon Davis (a book that actually appeared late in 1995, but we decided to include it here), Philip Levine speaks about Anthony Hecht, Tom Andrews considers Jane Kenyon, Charles Wright appreciates James McMichael, David St. John calls our attention to Alice Notley, and Stanley Plumly praises Arthur Vogelsang. The result is a satisfying sense of attention paid, both to books that will get attention elsewhere and to books that might otherwise be overlooked. The list we've compiled follows. What this editor would like to add here is a list of three more titles from which I would have tried to choose had I had time to write a review as well as edit this feature. It would have been hard to reduce the list to one:

a) Bruce Beasley, **Summer Mystagogia** (University Press of Colorado). Bruce Beasley is not quite like anyone else, and his progress has been dazzling to follow, one of the most satisfying growths into a major poetic presence (as yet virtually unrecognized) I have witnessed. This, his third collection, is his best to date, and its ability to transubstantiate pain and loss into spiritual wonder is not to be missed.

b) Nancy Willard, **Swimming Lessons** (Knopf). This New and Selected Poems by one of our most consistently original imaginations is a superb selection that should serve to remind readers of her high level of accomplishment over many years. Other poets, with grander reputations, seem to me to settle for a lot less, and to get praised for their smaller range and obsessiveness. But Willard is a true magician, generous and wise, and her poems will last longer than a lot of what is attracting temporary attention because it suits various political agendas.

c) Gary Snyder, **Mountains and Rivers Without End** (Counterpoint). An extremely ambitious and moving poem, forty years in the making, by one of our most gifted and original voices. Why does Snyder get overlooked so often when the prizes are given out? This year saw a *Selected Poems* by Allen Ginsburg that was largely an embarrassment, yet it had plenty of respectful press. Snyder, in his mountain retreat out West, sometimes feels like the forgotten man of American poetry. But this poem is one that readers can take years to get fully acquainted with. It deserves much wider response and recognition than I have seen so far.

None of the books I've mentioned, and none of the books our reviewers chose, were, for instance, on that list of National Book Critics Circle finalists. That's not necessarily a crime, and I would not be able to say, without reading all the books in question, whether the oversight suggests a serious problem of taste. My emphasis here has been on the problem created by the number of good books that come out, not on the literary politics that singles some out, fairly or unfairly, for attention.

*David Young*

Eavan Boland, *An Origin Like Water: Collected Poems 1967-1987* (Norton, 1996)

*An Origin Like Water* draws together poems from Eavan Boland's five earliest books of poetry, from *The Territory* of 1967 to *The Journey* of 1987. Part of the pleasure of reading this collection comes from seeing an important poet gain power by increments, emerging full-voiced over the span of twenty years. We see her shift from the elaborate, distanced, and contained energies of her earliest work, some of it written by the nineteen-year-old Boland, to a more complex and resonant poetic. *In Her Own Image* (1980) breaks with former constraints; she conveys the internalized perspectives of her female speakers in ways that, while seeming at moments overly influenced by Sylvia Plath, no doubt proved emancipatory for their raw, taboo-breaking insistence. *In Her Own Image* opened her poetic toward intimacy and directness, qualities that come more fully into evidence two years later in the poems of *Night Feed* (1982), particularly through Boland's intermeshing of domestic and political/historical themes. She lightens her lines through supple rhythms while deepening her attention to the meaning of daily routine, historical omissions, and the claims of Irish culture. By the time that we read *The Journey* (1987) we see a poet in full possession of her powers, and we have had the fascinating opportunity to chart the ways in which the very process of writing these hard-won, resonant poems schooled one of Ireland's most vital poets.

Lee Upton

Fran Castan, *The Widow's Quilt* (Canio's Editions, 1996)

My first impression of *The Widow's Quilt* was of wholeness. I had met a person who spoke directly to me, quietly, honestly, and without self-conscious ornament. Her book was seamless. This sort of seamlessness does not happen unless the poet is both skillful and intense. The book would be a hard book for a critic to



analyse. How could he separate favorite poems when they were all so necessary to each other? How nit-pick without nits?

Fran Castan became a widow early during the Vietnam War. Her husband was not a soldier, but a journalist, unconnected with the Army. The term *Widow's Quilt* is Castan's name for the flag that is removed from a soldier's coffin after his burial, folded, and given to the next of kin. Fran Castan was twenty-five years old, with a thirteen-month-old daughter, when she left Vietnam. Her book spans the time from her husband's death, her marriage to a second husband, with children of his own, to the time that all the children were grown. The dominant theme of the book is living a normal life in a distorted world.

The last poem of the book, "Waving," is a good example of Fran Castan's seamlessness. She takes an everyday scene and turns it, as if by accident, into a happy wish for a safe trip out to sea and a safe trip back. But what is *out* and what is *back*? She says that she does not know why all the people are waving, but she leaves the readers several imaginary choices: The ship may return from a successful shopping jaunt or a drenched picnic. It may come back from an execution or a bombing, with a few terrified survivors on its deck. Or it may not come back at all, but slowly float down the river Styx.

Here is the poem:

### WAVING

Sun in the water glinted about our shadows  
like halos in a dulled painting of saints.  
Toward the departing shore, a small figure,  
a man in a Boston Whaler, was waving.  
No one waved back.  
But the man kept waving and waving  
and so my hand lifted  
and waved back in longer and longer arcs  
as we drifted apart and the tears, how they came,  
how they came. And I didn't even know him.

And I wondered about this. Why did he need to wave  
to the large ferry boat full of people  
from his tiny Boston Whaler?  
Why did I need to wave back?  
Soon, others were waving, too. People  
in small pleasure boats were waving and waving.  
It was important to be waving.  
Safe journey, it said, safe journey.  
You will be waved out and waved back.

*Alberta Turner*

Jon Davis, **Scrimmage of Appetite** (University of Akron Press, 1995)

Jon Davis, in the most remarkable weave of lyric and prose meditations I've read in a long time, catches life in a world driven by appetite, with such authentic watchfulness and richness of memory, that we know at once we are part of his story. His language is direct, disarmingly simple for the complexity of ideas and feelings, and also disjunctive, full of odd twists and an astonishing range of images. Along with an overpowering sadness, there is startling affirmation, "small joys," like "the things my daughter says" or the guitarist who breaks "from the band, the mindless company, into something beautiful and terrifying."

Beauty and terror. Terror and delight. Hope and danger ("Man is being beaten on every channel . . ." but the bats in their darkness tell us that "hope and danger fly on the same wings"). Simultaneity. And, as in Auden's version of Brueghel, a powerful sense of *meanwhile* (there is a poem with that title). So that throughout the book we find "the chocolate milkshake, the agonizing death"; Rodney King and lilies shimmering; ". . . the destroyed motorcycle, the dying boy," and birds singing. Davis knows that ". . . heaven is a lake with earthly trash down in it, with Budweiser and Burger King down in it."

Like the "Old Masters," Davis is never wrong about suffering. He writes about the muck and violence, hunger and loneli-

ness, the banality of so much that occupies our days and nights, without succumbing to it. "Emptiness wants its story told," Davis says. And "I don't want to be alone in my seeing."

He is not alone. We share his vulnerability and "desperate longing" because of the excruciating honesty and beauty of his words. They hurt and restore us. I treasure this book. I keep it next to me. I read it over and over. Davis says, Look around you. People decide every morning to live. How do we manage that? These poems are a necessary answer.

*Shirley Kaufman*

Anthony Hecht, **Flight Among the Stones** (Knopf, 1996)

I can recall asking John Berryman in 1954 if he thought there was a poet my age I should be reading, and the one name he gave me was that of Anthony Hecht, whose first book, *A Summoning of Stones* would appear later that year. I tracked his work down in several magazines in the University of Iowa library and was astonished by his rhythmic facility and his wonderful wit. In his most recent book, *Flight Among the Stones*, published forty-two years later, there is no loss of intelligence, command, and wit, and there is an enormous gain in emotional power. Hecht is no longer as cheerful as the young poet of his first book, but he must have learned a great deal about the limits of our lives on earth to have written so acute and devastating a poem as "Death the Whore," which is the most astonishing poem about what we do to each other in the name of love that I have read in years.

*Philip Levine*

Jane Kenyon, **Otherwise: New & Selected Poems** (Graywolf, 1996)

Occasionally a book of poems is published in this country to something other than long and empty silence. *Otherwise* is a recent example. In the first five months following its publication, avail-



able only in hardcover, Kenyon's book sold over twelve thousand copies. (A source at Graywolf Press tells me it continues to sell at a clip of roughly a thousand hardcover copies per month.) What is sad about this phenomenon, of course, is that Jane Kenyon is no longer with us to know of our delight in her work, and that there will be no more of her poems for us to take delight in. What is encouraging about this phenomenon is that, like Philip Larkin's *Collected Poems* (which also surprised everybody by selling well), *Otherwise* is the rare, real thing.

Power and light accrue in this book. "Having It Out with Melancholy," which for me has become one of the essential texts on illness, shows us Kenyon at her best: fearless, unsentimental, heartbreaking, graceful, ruthless. By ruthless I mean that she goes for the jugular, refusing easy reconciliations:

Elavil, Ludiomil, Doxepin,  
Norpramin, Prozac, Lithium, Xanax,  
Wellbutrin, Parnate, Nardil, Zoloft.  
The coated ones smell sweet or have  
no smell; the powdery ones smell  
like the chemistry lab at school  
that made me hold my breath.

In the short space I have here, let me simply urge the reader to seek out this poem in its entirety. To give a sense of Kenyon's success in a smaller structure, here is a four-line poem called "The Sandy Hole":

The infant's coffin no bigger than a flightbag . . .  
The young father steps backward from the sandy hole,  
eyes wide and dry, his hand over his mouth.  
No one dares to come near him, even to touch his sleeve.

Here as elsewhere Kenyon finds speech for unspeakable isolation. To my mind, "The Sandy Hole" is as assured and as luminous as D. H. Lawrence's short poems such as "The White Horse."



*Otherwise* is not flawless. As her husband, Donald Hall (who provides a moving Afterword to the book), has written, "No poetry is so great as we demand that poetry be." Reading many of Kenyon's poems in one sitting focuses their narrow range of imagery and tone. But such weaknesses (and they are shared by many wonderful poets — consider how narrow is the range of imagery in Roethke's poems, for example) are more than made up for by the book's strengths, its hard-won clarity and humanity. *Otherwise* is a book to treasure.

Tom Andrews

James McMichael, **The World at Large** (University of Chicago Press, 1996)

Poetry, to bend a phrase, is becoming at least as poorly written as prose. Or some of it is. Like fiction, poetry seems to have bifurcated into a "popular" poetry and a serious, literary poetry. Fiction, of course, has been doing this for some time, perhaps because of its size, perhaps because of its audience. Now poetry, apparently, has become large enough, and has developed a sizable enough audience of its own, that — like an amoeba — it can divide and continue as two entities. This division may also be partially explained by the encroachment of "popular culture" as a critical vehicle in the universities these days. Whatever the reason, the actuality does seem to exist, though names will not be named. Not here, in any case. The name I do name, however, belongs to the other side, the serious side. And make no mistake about it, James McMichael's selected poems, *The World at Large*, is serious stuff, and even better written than prose.

Consistency of concentration. For twenty-five years it has run through his work like a tensile thread, like a fiber optic. From the early meditations on his mother's early death in *Against the Falling Evil*, through the marvellous and under-appreciated *The Lover's Familiar* and *Four Good Things* (what an extraordinary achievement

this is!) on to and including the longish and stylish title poem at the end of the book, the attention in *The World at Large*, the scrupulous, fierce and unblinking attention of the poems on the daily stations of our lives we visit and revisit until they become a metaphysic that visits us, is rather awesome, in the old sense of the word. In all the years I have been reading McMichael's work — and that is longer than twenty-five years — I have always been impressed by how he can manage image and narrative at the same time, with equal dexterity. This is hard to do, perhaps the ultimate switch-hitting. But he does it consistently, with power from both sides. I love the "ear" in his poems, the intelligence, the reach and the unapologetic microscope and truth of his enterprise. This is an outstanding book, and it contains the best work of one of the best writers we have had around for the past twenty-five years. I can only hope it will be read and appreciated with the severity and seriousness that went into its making. Posterity, plump your pillows.

Charles Wright

Alice Notley, **The Descent of Alette** (Penguin, 1996)

Alice Notley's *The Descent of Alette* is one of the most powerful and disturbing books I've ever read. It's certainly the most interesting volume I've come across in a long time. A book-length sequence, it's like *The Inferno* combined with Japanese animation — in other words, timeless and perfectly modern (that being, to me, the definition of great poetry). *The Descent of Alette* is also: an astonishing feminist text, a brilliant fable of modern life, a dazzling stylistic tour de force, and just plain fun to read. I'd opened up the book in a bookstore and put it down again, being a little put off with the use of quotation marks. My friend Mark Irwin and my wife Molly Bendall (both of whom are poets whose opinions I trust) told me not to be an idiot and go read this amazing book. Now listen closely: what Notley does with those quotation marks is to create a whole new notation of breath and measure in

the poetic line, one which is both proper and revelatory in this book. It's a stunning accomplishment, and it'll probably never work again in any other book, whether by her or by anybody else. *The Descent of Alette* is a monumental achievement in my view. Ignore it at your own peril.

David St. John

Arthur Vogelsang, *Cities and Towns* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1996)

There is no easy labelling of Arthur Vogelsang's third collection of poems, *Cities and Towns*, by far his best and most ambitious book to date and one of the best of last year. Instead of concentrating his surrealist energies on the image, as he's done in the past, Vogelsang has found an interrogating voice at once dissembling and direct — and by direct I mean free of any rhetorical reference that doesn't lead us immediately to his moment. Much of the time the speaker in these new poems is close to Swiftian in his cagey unreliability ("Listen to me as if you'll be on earth forever"); other times he seems absurdly convincing ("Listen, I don't know if everything's an accident,/ A continuing explosion in which the myths of eating and love are beside the point"). Under the surface of the voice, however, is a kind of moral indignation, a menacing anger that is sometimes self-directed. All in all, Vogelsang has created the rare sound of dark, Juvenalian complaint in a lyric sequence whose satiric target seems to be absurdity itself. The tone, in fact — and this is a power in the best of the poems — feels barely contained, the ardent big talk almost too big for the imagination asked to hold it. "Big" also applies to the size of the heart in these poems, their ability to find and/or magnify the emotion suddenly, instantaneously.

Many of Vogelsang's strongest effects are cumulative, built by juxtaposition and association over a page or more, poems that are hard to quote from. "The Face" is one of his better shorter poems:



The French horses were healthy.  
They had a crazed edge that was carefully preserved.  
The spoken language (vs. read) was too fast,  
It was a din like an under-fresh-water din.  
Many people made it, commenting on the animals and  
surrounding them.

Mounted — burning silks, small men —  
They walked away to the track. Everyone did.  
Immediately the brown and green perfectly kept paddock  
Was like the environs of a mansionless estate.  
Come back. Build your house.  
Wrongly on purpose I had bet first then observed.  
I lingered in the silence. My luck. The skyscrapers through  
the woods.  
Two bare unraced horses led in front of the remaining few of us  
Freaky kicked and squealed  
Then dreadful and abrupt raised in the air.  
The two grooms held on.  
One horse searched for my eyes in his heart's uncontrolled  
turmoil.

*Stanley Plumly*

## Notable Books of Poetry — 1996

- Adair, Virginia Hamilton, *Ants on the Melon* (Random House)
- Ammons, A.R., *Brink Road* (Norton)
- Appleman, Philip, *New and Selected Poems, 1956-1996* (University of Arkansas Press)
- Barresi, Dorothy, *The Post-Rapture Diner* (University of Pittsburgh Press)
- Basho, Matsuo, *Basho's Narrow Road: Spring and Autumn Passages*, trans. Hiroaki Sato (Stone Bridge Press)
- Beasley, Bruce, *Summer Mystagogia* (University Press of Colorado)
- Beispiel, David, *Shattering Air* (BOA Editions)
- Boland, Eavan, *An Origin Like Water: Collected Poems 1967-1987* (Norton)
- Bradley, George, *The Fire Fetched Down* (Knopf)
- Brosman, Catherine Savage, *Passages* (Louisiana State University Press)
- Brunk, Juanita, *Brief Landing on the Earth's Surface* (University of Wisconsin Press)
- Burns, Ralph, *Swamp Candles* (University of Iowa Press)
- Cafagña, Marcus, *The Broken World* (University of Illinois Press)
- Campo, Rafael, *What the Body Told* (Duke University Press)
- Carruth, Hayden, *Scrambled Eggs & Whiskey: Poems 1991-1995* (Copper Canyon Press)
- Chappell, Fred, *Spring Garden* (Louisiana State University Press)
- Clary, Killarney, *By Common Salt* (Oberlin College Press)
- Clifton, Lucille, *The Terrible Stories* (BOA Editions)
- Cole, Norma, *Contrafact* (Potes & Poets Press)
- Collins, Billy, *The Art of Drowning* (University of Pittsburgh Press)
- Conoley, Gillian, *Beckon* (Carnegie Mellon)
- Cooley, Nicole, *Resurrection* (Louisiana State University Press)
- Copioli, Rosita, *The Blazing Lights of the Sun*, trans. by Renata Treitel (Sun & Moon Press)
- Cornish, Sam, *Cross a Parted Sea* (Zoland Books)
- Crow, Mary, *I Have Tasted the Apple* (BOA Editions)
- Dischell, Stuart, *Evenings & Avenues* (Penguin)
- Dobyns, Stephen, *Common Carnage* (Penguin)
- Doty, Mark, *Heaven's Coast* (HarperCollins)
- Dunn, Stephen, *Loosestrife* (Norton)
- Espada, Martín, *Imagine the Angels of Bread* (Norton)

Fargas, Laura, *An Animal of the Sixth Day* (Texas Tech University Press)  
 Fogel, Alice B., *I Love This Dark World* (Zoland Books)  
 Frost, Carol, *Venus and Don Juan* (TriQuarterly Books)  
 Frost, Richard, *Neighbor Blood* (Saradande Books)  
 Fulton, Alice, *Dance Script With Electric Ballerina* (University of Illinois Press)  
 Garcia, Albert, *Rainshadow* (Copper Beech Press)  
 Gerstler, Amy, *Crown of Weeds* (Penguin)  
 Ginsberg, Allen, *Selected Poems: 1947-1995* (HarperCollins)  
 Glazner, Greg, *Singularity* (Norton )  
 Glück, Louise, *Meadowlands* (Ecco Press)  
 Gorham, Sarah, *The Tension Zone* (Four Way Books)  
 Greger, Debora, *Desert Fathers, Uranium Daughters* (Penguin)  
 Gregerson, Linda, *The Woman Who Died in Her Sleep* (Houghton Mifflin)  
 Hall, Donald, *The Old Life* (Houghton Mifflin)  
 Harrison, Jeffrey, *Signs of Arrival* (Copper Beech Press)  
 Hass, Robert, *Sun Under Wood* (Ecco Press)  
 Heaney, Seamus, *The Spirit Level* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)  
 Hecht, Anthony, *Flight Among the Tombs* (Knopf)  
 Hewett, Greg, *To Collect the Flesh* (New Rivers Press)  
 Heyen, William, *Crazy Horse in Stillness* (BOA Editions)  
 Holden, Jonathan, *The Sublime* (University of North Texas Press)  
 Holub, Miroslav, *Intensive Care* (Oberlin College Press)  
 Hummer, T.R., *Walt Whitman in Hell* (Louisiana State University Press)  
 Irwin, Mark, *Quick, Now, Always* (BOA Editions)  
 Johnson, Lemuel, *Hand on the Navel* (Africa World Press)  
 Johnson, Nancy, *Zoo and Cathedral* (White Pine Press)  
 Kaufman, Shirley, *Roots in the Air: New & Selected Poems* (Copper Canyon Press)  
 Kenyon, Jane, *Otherwise: New and Selected Poems* (Graywolf Press)  
 Kinzie, Mary, *Ghost Ship* (Knopf)  
 Kircher, Pamela, *Whole Sky* (Four Way Books)  
 Kumin, Maxine, *Connecting the Dots* (Norton)  
 Lea, Sydney, *To the Bone: New and Selected Poems* (University of Illinois Press)  
 Levertov, Denise, *Sands of the Well* (New Directions)  
 Longley, Michael, *The Ghost Orchld* (Wake Forest University Press)  
 Mahon, Derek, *The Hudson Letter* (Wake Forest University Press)

Maiden, Nell, *Reflections in a Clockshop* (Sow's Ear Press)  
 Malanga, Gerard, *Mythologies of the Heart* (Black Sparrow Press)  
 Marshall, Jack, *Millennium Fever* (Coffee House Press)  
 McMichael, James, *The World at Large* (University of Chicago Press)  
 McPherson, Sandra, *Edge Effect: Trails and Portrayals* (Wesleyan/University Press of New England)  
 McPherson, Sandra, *The Spaces Between Birds* (Wesleyan/University Press of New England)  
 Meinke, Peter, *Scars* (University of Pittsburgh Press)  
 Merrin, Jeredith, *Shift* (University of Chicago Press)  
 Merwin, W.S., *The Vixen* (Knopf)  
 Miller, Jane, *Memory at These Speeds: New & Selected Poems* (Copper Canyon Press)  
 Notley, Alice, *The Descent of Alette* (Penguin)  
 Nurkse, D., *Voices Over Water* (Four Way Books)  
 Ostriker, Alicia Suskin, *The Crack in Everything* (University of Pittsburgh Press)  
 Pack, Robert, *Minding the Sun* (University of Chicago Press)  
 Perillo, Lucia, *The Body Mutinies* (Purdue University Press)  
 Purpura, Lia, *The Brighter the Veil* (Orchises Press)  
 Reed, John R., *Life Sentences* (Wayne State University Press)  
 Reinhard, John, *On the Road to Patsy Cline* (New Rivers Press)  
 Rilke, Rainer Maria, *Collected Poems*, trans. Edward Snow (Farrar, Straus and Giroux/North Point Press)  
 Rivard, David, *Wise Poison* (Graywolf Press)  
 Romtvedt, David, *Certainty* (White Pine Press)  
 Rothenberg, Jerome, *Seedings & Other Poems* (New Directions)  
 Ruffin, Paul, *Circling* (Browder Springs Press)  
 Ryan, Kay, *Elephant Rocks* (Grove Press)  
 Sapphire, *American Dreams* (Vintage)  
 Scalapino, Leslie, *The Front Matter, Dead Souls* (Wesleyan/University Press of New England)  
 Schuyler, James, *Collected Poems* (Farrar, Straus, & Giroux)  
 Seaton, Maureen, *Furious Cooking* (University of Iowa Press)  
 Seshadri, Vijay, *Wild Kingdom* (Graywolf Press)  
 Shapiro, Alan, *Mixed Company* (University of Chicago Press)  
 Shapiro, Alan, *The Last Happy Occasion* (University of Chicago Press)



Shepard, Reginald, *Some Are Drowning* (University of Pittsburgh Press)  
 Shirley, Aleda, *Long Distance* (Miami University Press)  
 Shore, Jane, *Music Minus One* (Picador, USA)  
 Simic, Charles, *Walking the Black Cat* (Harcourt Brace)  
 Sklarew, Myra, *Lithuania: New and Selected Poems* (Azul Editions)  
 Sleigh, Tom, *The Chain* (University of Chicago Press)  
 Smith, Bruce, *The Distance* (Press of Appletree Alley)  
 Smith, Dave, *Floating on Solitude: Three Volumes of Poetry* (University of Illinois Press)  
 Smith, Patti, *The Coral Sea* (Norton)  
 Snyder, Gary, *Mountains and Rivers Without End* (Counterpoint)  
 St. Germain, Sheryl, *The Journals of Scheherazade* (University of North Texas Press)  
 Stafford, William, *Even in Quiet Places* (Confluence Press)  
 Tan Lin, *Lotion Bullwhip Giraffe* (Sun & Moon Press)  
 Torra, Joseph, *Keep Watching the Sky* (Zoland Books)  
 Troupe, Quincy, *Avalanche* (Coffee House Press)  
 Trudell, Dennis, *Fragments in Us: Recent and Earlier Poems* (University of Wisconsin Press)  
 Upton, Lee, *Approximate Darling* (University of Georgia Press)  
 Vazirani, Reetika, *White Elephants* (Beacon Press)  
 Vogelsang, Arthur, *Cities and Towns* (University of Massachusetts Press)  
 Voigt, Ellen Bryant, *The Forces of Plenty* (Carnegie Mellon University Press)  
 Volkman, Karen, *Crash's Law* (Norton)  
 Wagoner, David, *Walt Whitman Bathing* (University of Illinois Press)  
 Wallace, Ronald, *Time's Fancy* (University of Pittsburgh Press)  
 Warn, Emily, *The Novice Insomniac* (Copper Canyon Press)  
 Weigl, Bruce, *Sweet Lorain* (Northwestern University Press/TriQuarterly Books)  
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## CONTRIBUTORS

BRUCE BEASLEY's third book, **Summer Mystagogia**, was selected by Charles Wright for the 1996 Colorado Prize. He is also the author of **Spirituals** and **The Creation**. He teaches at Western Washington University. About the long sequence in this issue, he writes: "It's modeled on the Puritan spiritual diaries and is conceived as an extended spiritual meditation over the course of a summer."

JUDITH BERKE lives in Miami Beach. She has published **White Morning** and **Acting Problems**. These poems are from a work in progress, **The Sky Inside**.

BILLY COLLINS's most recent collection of poems is **The Art of Drowning** (Pittsburgh, 1995).

MARTHA COLLINS's most recent book of poems is **A History of Small Life on a Windy Planet** (Georgia, 1993). A book of translations from the Vietnamese of Nguyen Quang Thieu, co-translated with the author, is due out soon.

BECKIAN FRITZ GOLDBERG's books include **Body Betrayer** and **In the Badlands of Desire**, both from Cleveland State. She teaches at Arizona State University.

JON LOOMIS holds an MFA from the University of Virginia, and currently directs the summer program at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. We are especially pleased to feature him in this issue with poems that are from his first collection, **Vanitas Motel**, which has just won the *FIELD* Poetry Series first annual contest, and will appear in that series next winter.

ANNE MARIE MACARI has appeared before in *FIELD* and can also be found in our anthology of the prose poem, **Models of the Universe**. She lives in Mount Kisco, New York, and is a long-distance partner in a flower business in Hawaii.

CAROL POTTER, author of **Upside Down in the Dark** (AliceJames Books), lives and teaches in western Massachusetts.

The poems of YI SANG in this issue are part of a larger project by the husband and wife team of JUNG YUL YU and JAMES KIMBRELL. Yi Sang was born in Seoul, Korea in 1910, during the Japanese colonization, and died shortly after being imprisoned in Japan for "thought crimes." His work is influenced by Dada and Surrealism.





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